



Huron Transition Homes

STRATEGIC PLAN

JUNE 2010



Huronia Transition Homes

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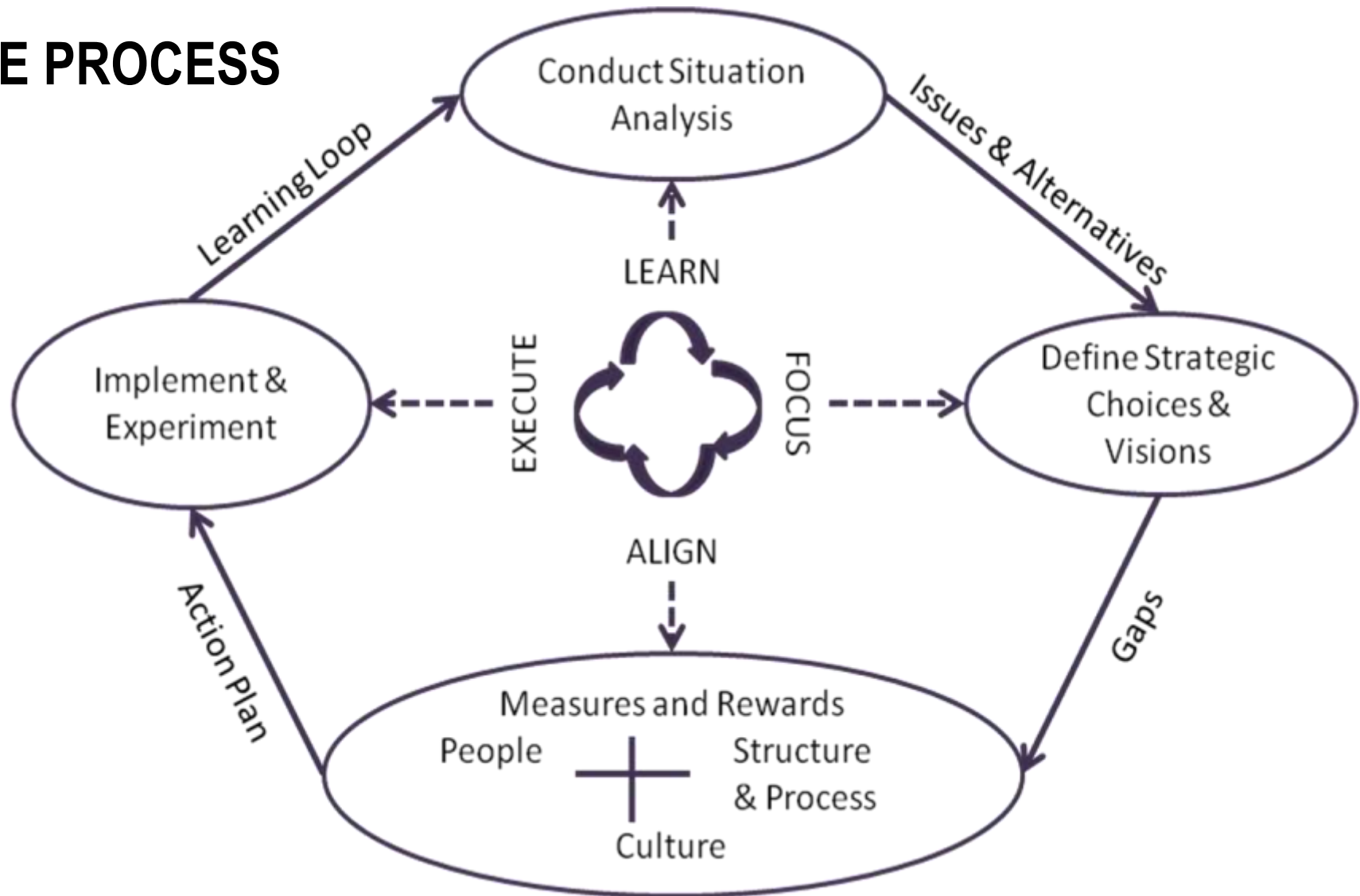
INTRODUCTION

The strategic planning process is intended to answer three key leadership questions:

1. What is the environment in which Huronia Transition Homes must operate?
2. What are the few things we must do outstandingly well to succeed?
3. How will we mobilize our organization to implement our key strategic initiatives?

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THE PROCESS





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SERVICES

Provides services to women in and around (catchment area), in a consistent, supportive and respectful manner with special attention to abused women and their children, including but not necessarily limited to:

1. Secure emergency shelter.
2. Community based on-site and telephone services including crisis, emergency and short term counseling, information referral and personal advocate services.
3. Practical support and assistance.
4. Contribute to the creation of new options and choices for women and their children by advocating for necessary and effective change within the government policies, priorities, legal institutions and social and medical services.
5. To assist women in their efforts to explore valuable options in a manner which promotes and supports personal empowerment, independence and autonomy.
6. Recognize and respond to the unique and special needs of children who have witnessed violence against women.
7. Ensure our properties and services are physically and geographically linguistically culturally and financially accessible to women and their children.
8. Work cooperatively, share information resources and expertise, establish effective partnerships and support joint initiatives with other agencies and organizations which respect and support the philosophy.
9. Educate the public about violence against women.
10. Provide meaningful opportunities for individuals and groups to support the philosophy, mandate and values through volunteer activities and financial contributions.



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SITUATION ANALYSIS



HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

The organization has experienced five years of relative stability during which time all of the strategic initiatives articulated in the 2005 strategic plan were realized. The following provides a brief description of the realization of the 6 strategic initiatives outlined in the 2005 plan.

Immediately following the completion of the 2005 planning process the organization applied for and received a \$155,000 trillium grant for the purpose of operationalizing its development plan. The development plan articulated a comprehensive fundraising initiative inclusive of a volunteer program and a public relations strategy. The development program has been very successful in raising the profile of the organization in the Midland area. The Board of Directors has become much more active in the area of fundraising, establishing a committee whose greatest achievement is the very successful reflections gala which continues to grow both in popularity and in revenue generation.

A program evaluation process has been implemented across the organization focused on the crisis line which serves as the point of entry for the women we serve.

A central data base is now used to collect statistical information required for all ministry funded programs and provides the organization with immediate access to up-to-date data on service delivery.

With the support of one of the funding ministries the organization conducted a study and developed a best practice model for creating a second stage housing facility for Simcoe County. The results of this study indicated that a minimum of between \$3,000, 000 and \$5,600,000 would be needed in capital funding and with an additional



\$100,000 annually to operate the site. It was determined that without full government support this project was beyond the financial capacity of the organization. Consequently the organization is looking at other ways to expand the system of supports and services to the women and children served. New initiatives have included the development of women's support groups for both La Maison Rosewood Shelter and Athena's Sexual Assault Counselling and Advocacy Centre.

The organization has become much more vocal in the local community on issues that impact women as a whole and abused woman specifically and has been very successful in increasing its advocacy role. Examples of this include speaking out about the potential impact of the hospital amalgamation, December 6th events, and the Rosewood Report. The organization continues to incorporate an anti-racist/anti-oppression framework at all levels. This framework is evidenced in both governance and operational policy and in the newly emerging commitment to work within a harm reduction service delivery model.

The organization recognized that its trade name "Women's Resources of Simcoe County" created confusion and did not aptly describe the services or programs offered. Consequently the Board of Directors decided to identify each of the programs by name and revert to using the corporate name, Huronia Transition Homes as the unifying name for all programs. The re-launch of the corporate name has been successful and minimized public confusion about who we are and what we do. The Board also reviewed its governance structure and adopted a new policy framework in 2009.



In 2008 the Ministries funding Francophone support services met with the Directors of HTH to inform them that they would be supporting the creation of an independent Francophone Centre. As such, commencing in *** HTH was no longer responsible for the francophone service, however we remain the designated Francophone Shelter for Simcoe County. The board was in full support of the decision and supported an independent Francophone centre. We have partnered with the newly developed centre.

In 2008 La Maison Rosewood Shelter was the recipient of a substantial bequest made by the late Robert Hartog. The board has designated this money as a bequest and is in the process of establishing a foundation to manage this money to and to ensure long term financial stability for the organization.

In 2009 the organization entered into a partnership with the County of Simcoe and began offering services to homeless women and their children. The shelter has capacity to house 5 homeless women and children.



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WHAT HAVE WE DONE RIGHT OVER THE YEARS?

2010

- Our calendarized group received very positive recognition from the women.
- We have elevated our reputation within the community via our advocacy role; this confidence is demonstrated by our receipt of the Trillium Grant and funds received by the Hartog Estate.
- We continue to be true to our philosophy and values.
- We have a true commitment to serve all women.
- We listen and take guidance from the women we serve.
- We respond to the complex needs of women.
- We continue to offer excellent service.
- We have a firm feminist perspective, a strong A/R, A/O framework.
- Women describe our services as welcoming, *“coming home to a hug”*.
- Our harm reduction philosophy reduces homelessness.
- The schedule of services is driven by the women we serve.
- We engage in more self reflection and use our experience to inform others.
- Maintaining confidentiality and privacy remains one of our strengths.



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WHAT LESSONS HAVE WE LEARNED?

2010

- There is huge pressure to fundraise.
- We have learned that the methodology we currently use for fundraising may not be the most effective, the ROI is not there. We need to develop a model with the right ROI equation.
- Need to look at developing a Foundation.
- We need to remember the community of Barrie when fundraising.
- Change is stressful and change leads to further change.
- We had to ensure that when creating a more formalized organization we were not creating an oppressive organization.
- We have to continue to be aware of the demographics of the women we serve.
- We must always be prepared to adapt our services to meet the needs of our changing community.
- We have learned to be more proactive.
- We have learned that having a “return on our investments” is key to sustainability.
- We are recognized as the most achieving shelter with regards to the implementation of a AR/AO framework and staff training.



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WHAT HAS CHANGED?

2010

- Increased our profile.
- Our whole structure has changed.
- Our Governance model is new.
- The new name for SAC is supported.
- Our catchment area is most of North Simcoe
- We now have a website – we need to embrace our social network more.
- We can talk therapeutically with other professionals.
- We have huge support from community foundations.
- Refocused our key identity events.
- Incredible service profile.
- Serving women at CNCC.
- Homeless mandate.



WHAT BARRIERS MUST WE OVERCOME TO CONTINUE TO BE SUCCESSFUL?

2010

- Need to continue to implement our Governance model.
- Current fundraising model not as effective as it could be.



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WHAT ARE THE TRENDS?

2010

- Lack of primary care.
- Significantly less children.
- Seeing women with longer histories of violence.
- Serving 3rd generation women.
- Psychological abuse more prominent.
- We have to do a better job providing service to younger women.
- We are not seeing extreme physical abuse.
- Women are continually turned away from service in Simcoe County – the excuse being given is “*we don’t have the skills to serve these women*”.
- Women are poorer and we are seeing more working poor women.
- Family Health Teams will lead to more women being “diagnosed”.
- Increasing social isolation – women have a place to live but no money to do anything.
- Ongoing technological changes. We have not kept up with all technological changes.
- Trend toward serving men, this may impact us but it is not our mandate.



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STRENGTHS

2010

- Philosophy and values.
- Harm reduction philosophy
- Our identity events are embedded – predictable and promote what we do.
- Financial stability and increasing recognition from donors and community funders.



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WEAKNESSES

2010

- We do not have a well developed HR strategy and have no succession plan.
- Need to improve our alignment strategy – salary, rewards, and culture.
- Need to develop a resource allocation strategy.

Athena's

- Need to continue to improve awareness of our services.
- Continue to improve activities to connect women.
- Crisis line needs improvement from 6:00 pm to 9:00 pm.
- Computer access for women.
- Increase non therapeutic supports – multipurpose centre.
- Need more programs / activities for women in residence.



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FEEDBACK FROM THE WOMEN

ATHENA'S

- Coming to Athena's was the best thing I have ever done, best thing that ever happened to me.
- As a result of the services I received I now have my will to live back.
- Very experienced and professional staff, improved my self esteem and my confidence. I would still be spinning my wheels.
- The "drop in" group is excellent. I feel a sense of community with other women and it is a lot of fun.
- The name change was a positive thing to do.
- I am getting great help but I am not sure what the agency offers.
- Non-judgmental counseling, I feel comfortable and heard.
- The nine week support group is excellent. The experience is transforming. The group activities are excellent and create energy within the group.
- My anger is dangerous and I am getting help with that.
- Advocacy work is great.
- I have been helped with a whole lot of things, i.e. filling in forms I don't understand, trying to get other services I need. Without this help I would be on the street.



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FEEDBACK FROM THE WOMEN *(continued)*

SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT

- The Crisis Line between 6:00 pm and 9:00 pm not as good. I feel stressed calling because the person on the other end of the line is stressed and preoccupied and interrupted
- Improve awareness. I needed these services most of my life and I have only found you now. All of these years going to my doctor and taking more and more pills – not once did he refer me here.

LA MAISON ROSEWOOD SHELTER

When I arrived I felt like crap. I looked a mess. I had no motivation. I needed a “Boot Camp” approach. Sock it to us – I think participation in certain things should be mandatory. We need more peer support. In addition to counseling watch videos, do role playing.

Note: All other women in the group did not agree with mandatory attendance at anything but did agree that perhaps more structure was needed with assertive encouragement. No mandatory programs, “have to have a voice”, can’t categorize women



FEEDBACK FROM THE WOMEN *(continued)*

LA MAISON ROSEWOOD SHELTER *(continued)*

- We should maybe have a 'feel good opportunity' like is provided for cancer patients. Have someone come in and teach us how to apply make-up, show us tips on hair care, etc. The person coming in should not be local to maintain our privacy.
- I am a survivor of a violent crime. I have not stayed at the shelter but if I had I would have needed an assertive form of encouragement (i.e. imposed self care - I expect you will come to breakfast but first make yourself look pretty, brush your teeth, comb your hair, etc.). I agree with some structure. I would need a regime to give me motivation.
- Women's 9-week support group is excellent.
- Update victims services - two numbers for Midland, then sent here. Need to improve awareness at potential referral points. I needed services sooner.
- I was viciously assaulted. My abuser had a previous conviction for assault, but the police would not disclose this to me and I then became his victim. This agency should advocate for mandatory reporting of persons convicted of assault on women like they do with sexual offenders.

Note: Not all women agreed with this.



FEEDBACK FROM THE WOMEN *(continued)*

LA MAISON ROSEWOOD SHELTER *(continued)*

- I had an excellent experience here. Every time I had a problem it was addressed. Every time I wanted to speak with someone the staff made themselves available.
- I am not one for group meetings, one-to-one is better for me.
- I got the help I needed and became a different person.
- My privacy was protected here.
- I had a superb experience. Staff were concerned, caring, compassionate, professional and helpful.
- Food is excellent but when I come back from work none was left for me. Food goes frequently missing.
- Choices for Children groups are excellent.
- We should have opportunities outside of the residential program. We need a gathering place. A place to socialize. A safe place that feels like a hug.
- We need day programs; a drop in place.
- We need non-therapeutic support; positive buddies; sensitive volunteers who are interested in supporting women.



FEEDBACK FROM THE WOMEN *(continued)*

LA MAISON ROSEWOOD SHELTER *(continued)*

- Maybe we could have a centre of some kind that is mostly volunteer operated with a large kitchen and other rooms. “Survivor Centre” - this place could be our connection with other women – a place to learn – a place to feel safe.
- What about a community kitchen and garden.
- This centre could be a place where we could learn more skills, cooking, money management, car repair, house repair, so we become more independent.
- I would like to meet other young mothers or women role models
- I enjoyed my time here – professional and supportive even though I was very nervous coming in.
- The physical facilities are clean and comfortable. Beds were comfy and the linens lovely.
- Best shelter I have been in.
- Heat upstairs always had to be on to keep downstairs warm. At times upstairs was too hot and so were the meeting rooms.
- No access to computers or the internet.



FEEDBACK FROM THE WOMEN *(continued)*

LA MAISON ROSEWOOD SHELTER *(continued)*

- Maybe we could get a keyboard or designate a room as a music room – music can be very therapeutic.
- Parking is a big issue. My stalker knew my car and I had to park where my car was visible – could we use a few spots at the police station?
- The front entrance is so visible. I was very nervous coming in the front door. I felt very vulnerable stepping out the front door. Security is better in Barrie. Could we come in the back door?
- Staff handled conflict pretty well.
- The shelter has high risk times – Friday and Saturday night. There needs to be two staff. I feel sorry for staff sometimes – during emergencies staff are vulnerable. Rule management is important.
- There needs to be more emphasis placed on emergency protocols.



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FEEDBACK FROM THE WOMEN *(continued)*

Note: There was a very animated discussion about harm reduction.

HARM REDUCTION

- Are we safe or not safe
- I don't believe women should be allowed alcohol in their room, and besides, during one episode the woman was walking around with her wine and she set it down and a child drank it.

- Women should not stay here when intoxicated. Substance abuse affects the safety of others.
- I would be hesitant to bring my children here.
- Many of us have alcohol abusive husbands – we don't want to experience that here and we don't want our children exposed to it either.
- This is a facility with children – are they protected?

Note: There was reference made to an incident where an intoxicated woman was agitated and threatening, another woman removed babies from the room because she thought they were in danger. There was also reference to an incident involving a shovel.



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FEEDBACK FROM THE WOMEN *(continued)*

HARM REDUCTION *(continued)*

- I think this approach, (allowing intoxication), will hurt our image in the community.
- Women can feel oppressed where they don't feel safe.

Note: The women were animated ambivalent but trying to be open about harm reduction. From their feedback the writer got the impression that the shelter is experiencing implementation challenges.

THEFT

- Many of the women expressed concern for the amount of theft.
- One woman stated that the baby supplies are being stolen offered to others in the community or being sold.
- Stuff should be going to those that need it. People donating may stop if they knew what happened to their generous donation. More security is required.



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PRIORITIES

1. **Create a new Development Strategy**
 - Foundation with staff support
 - Continue with what we have – fundraiser plus events
 - Should we continue with the Gala? Should we continue with the Gala and change the format?
2. **Develop a multipurpose centre which offers a wide variety of non-therapeutic supports**
 - Employment – start a business
 - Social activities
 - Skill based programs / services
3. **Improve our technological systems**
 - Improve website
 - Develop a methodology for dissemination of information
 - Embrace social networks
4. **Develop a Human Resource Strategy**
 - Continue to implement new Governance model
 - Succession planning
 - Alignment strategy – salaries, rewards, culture
5. **Develop a Harm Reduction Strategy**
 - Continue implementation across the organization
 - Document and disseminate challenges and practices
6. **Develop an Allocation Strategy**
7. **Develop a Youth Strategy**
8. **Develop a methodology for the delivery of Francophone services**